



Census Scientific Advisory Committee

**Administrative Records Working Group
Final Report**

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CSAC

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Why is AR Use Critically Important?

- Roughly 50 million NRFU addresses
(30M Occupied, 15M Vacant, 5M Non-Existent)
 - ARs can significantly reduce field staff, repeated visits
 - Potential \$1.4 billion reduction in follow-up data collection costs
- Statistical testing / simulations in recent years confirm the utility of AR use
- NRFUs for upcoming Census data collections may rise given the American public's shifting attitudes about government oversight

Working Group (WG) Charter

- Provide input on use of administrative records (ARs) to reduce costs of NRFUs and improve quality of population counts
- Review and assess current procedures for AR use, and ongoing statistical testing
- Identify discrepancies and inefficiencies that can be improved in distinguishing Occupied, Vacant and Non-existent addresses
- Consider criteria in selecting what is used from the records and their impact on current disparities in reporting on households and individuals

Uses for ARs in 2020 NRFU Operation

- Categorize as many NRFU addresses as possible, distinguishing Occupied, Vacant or Nonexistent, and minimizing error
- Generate accurate roster of Occupied addresses using ARs and statistical modeling
- Determine characteristics of individuals and household compositions where possible

Current Sources for ARs

Core data sources:

- CARRA data such as KidLink
- CMS Medicare Enrollment Database
- IHS Patient Registration File
- IRS Forms 1040 and 1099
- USPS Undeliverable-As-Addressed and Delivery Sequence File

Additional sources include: 2010 Decennial counts, ACS 5yr block group estimates, Census MAF, CMS Medicaid, HUD data, SSA NUMIDENT, SSS Registration

WG Activities *(Details in Working Group Final Report)*

1. Consider utility of various AR data sources
2. Advise on workflow for handling NRFUs
3. Assess strategies to categorize NRFU units (Occupied, Vacant, Non-existent)
4. Compare national with sub-national models, assignment of HH composition (e.g., race, # children)
5. Review use of ARs to improve American Community Survey (ACS) data collection on population and housing

Recommendations for CSAC Consideration

1. *Manage Administrative Records Testing Workflows*

Continue testing / modeling AR utility in handling NRFU units, for the upcoming Decennial Census data collection and for future efforts.

Testing and analysis take time but are less costly than repeated NRFU follow-ups. Many times, WG heard that testing could not be extended (e.g., adding parameters / thresholds, testing more than a single study area) simply because time is too short.

Incomplete testing might provide incomplete information. Revised workflow and added statistical staff would permit comprehensive testing. Given that ARs improve reliability and quality, adjust workflow to maximize return on investment, in the upcoming census and into the future.

Testing and validation obviously incur cost, labor and time; however, such outlays are important and must be prioritized.

Recommendations for CSAC Consideration

2. *Continue vigilance about all potential sources of reduced quality in population counts and household characterizations.*

Pay special attention to the inclusion of the citizenship question and potential impacts on accuracy of self-reports.

The white paper by Brown et al. (2018) *Understanding the Quality of Alternative Citizenship Data Sources for the 2020 Census*. CES 18-38 provides an excellent example of the types of work that should be pursued.

Recommendations for CSAC Consideration

3. *Consider convening a new CSAC Working Group to explore the possibility of expanded roles for Administrative Records use in upcoming data collections and surveys.*

ARs are utilized at different stages for Decennial Census than for ACS surveys, and the impact of *when* they are utilized may be important.

New or innovative uses for ARs may become apparent in considering the results of modeling and simulation.